

## Relaxation

### Deep Breathing

1. Lie down on a blanket on the floor. Bend your knees up toward you and move your feet until they are about eight inches apart with your toes turned slightly outward. Keep your spine as straight as possible.
2. Scan your body and identify places that hold tension
3. Put one hand on your abdomen and one on your chest.
4. Inhale slowly through your nose into your abdomen – so that it pushes your hand up. Hold your breath while you count to five (count in your head)
5. Smile and exhale through your mouth, taking as long as possible. Make a shushing sound as you exhale.
6. Repeat at least 5 times.
7. When you are finished, scan your body to see if tension remains.
8. When you are familiar with the technique, you won't need to lie down to do it. You can do it sitting or standing, whenever you feel tension in your body.

(Taken from *The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Handbook*, Davis, Eshelman, & McKay (1995, 27))

### Progressive Relaxation

Progressive relaxation is a technique designed to help you tense and then relax all muscle groups. The goal is to tense each muscle group for 5 – 10 seconds and then relax that same muscle group for 20 – 30 seconds. You may repeat the sequence until your entire body is in a state of relaxation.

This sequence will take you from head to toe:

- Wrinkle your forehead
- Squint your eyes
- Open your mouth wide
- Push your tongue against the roof of your mouth.
- Clench your jaw.
- Push your head back.
- One side at a time, roll your head to each shoulder.
- One shoulder at a time, shrug your shoulder up as if to touch your ear.
- Hold your arms out. Make a fist with each hand.
- One hand at a time, push your hands down into a surface
- One side at a time, make a fist, bend your arm, tighten your arm while holding the fist.
- Take a deep breath and hold it.
- Tighten your chest muscles.
- Arch your back.
- Tighten your abdomen.
- Push your abs out.
- Pull your abs in.
- Tighten your hips.
- One at a time push the heels of your feet into a surface.,
- One at a time, tighten your legs below the knee.,
- One at a time, curl your toes under as if to touch the bottoms of your feet.
- One at a time, curl your toes up as if to touch your knees.

### **Quick Relaxation**

1. Curl both fists and tighten your biceps and forearms as if you were lifting weights. Relax
2. Wrinkle your forehead and, at the same time, press your head as far back as possible. Roll it in a complete circle clockwise, then roll it counter-clockwise.
3. Wrinkle up the muscles in your face in a frown, with squinted eyes, pursed lips, tongue pressed on the roof of your mouth, shoulders scrunched. Relax.
4. Arch your back and take a deep breath into your chest. Hold the breath for five seconds and then relax. Take another breath, this time into your stomach. Hold it five seconds and then relax.
5. Pull your feet towards your face, tightening your shins. Curl your toes and tighten your calves, thighs, and buttocks. Relax.

Taken from *The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Handbook*, Davis, Eshelman, & McKay (1995, 35 - 38)